

The Hon. J. WARREN said he had come to the conclusion that Wages Boards were simply a lever in the hands of the Labour Party to increase the wages of employees. The awards seemed to be carried out when the Labour Party saw fit to co-operate with them. If the employee broke away from them nothing was done in the matter. The employer merely suffered; but if the employer broke away he was liable to punishment. A Labour leader had said it was a very easy matter for a firm to be made to pay higher wages than it had been doing. It merely had to add a little more to the cost of the articles produced to make up the difference. But that could not apply to the country producer. The manufacturer could not raise his price to the purchasers of his commodities. The price was fixed for him. If Wages Boards were going to raise prices and wages in the future as they had in the past, and create strikes and disorganization of business, they should not be supported. If they were extended to the country the same state of affairs might exist there. The progress of the country would then come to a standstill, and people would have to give up employing labour altogether. He saw no advantage to be gained by Wages Boards. He believed that many people approved of them only because they were the lesser of the two evils, Wages Boards and Arbitration Courts. It had been stated the other day by a member of the Legislative Council with considerable experience, that Wages Boards were a disadvantage to employers in the General District. That showed that they were an evil and not a benefit. If manufacturers and producers were to be handicapped, a serious blow would be struck to the progress of the country. He would oppose Wages Boards whenever they were brought forward.

Agreed to.

# ABATTOIRS BILL.

## Second reading.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the Bill had been before the other Chamber last session, and had been referred to a select committee. Mr. Brown, one of the representatives of the Northern Territory, had been a member of it, and when he had ceased to be a member of Parliament the committee had been unable to continue its work. The Bill had been reintroduced in the Assembly this session and another committee appointed to consider and report on the measure. The report of that select committee had been presented to the Assembly and ordered to be printed on September 12. The Bill provided for the establishment of

abattoirs at places without the metropolitan area. It was prepared on the model of the Metropolitan Abattoirs Act, 1908, as amended by the Act of 1910, the provisions of which Act had been followed as nearly as circumstances permitted. It might, however, be observed at the outset that there was one important exemption not found in the Metropolitan Act, namely, the exemption of slaughtering of healthy stock for family use, provided a proper record was kept. Hon. members would find that dealt with in clause 7. That exemption occurred in the New Zealand Act, and was probably due to the circumstances of country life. The Act would come into force only in a particular locality after it had been proclaimed an abattoirs area. The machinery of that was set out in Part II. of the Bill. Clause 10 provided for a petition by the ratepayers of a municipality or district council district for the taking of a poll on the question whether or not the municipality or district (with or without other adjoining area) should be proclaimed; and thereupon a poll was to be taken (clause 11); and if the result was favourable the area was to be proclaimed (clause 12). The governing body of the area for abattoirs purposes was to be a board. If only one local government area was included the board would consist of the town or district council. In regard to the other cases, clause 13 provided that the area was not to be proclaimed until the Minister was satisfied that arrangements had been made between the councils of the interested areas regarding (1) the constitution of the board; and (2) the financial matters connected with the abattoir to be established. There were also provisions for extending an abattoirs area and for the amalgamation of areas, on satisfactory arrangements being made regarding the constitution of the governing body and the finances (clauses 14 to 17). The clauses of Part II., from 18 to 31, were similar to the provisions of the Metropolitan Act and District Councils Acts referred to in the marginal references and dealing with similar matters. The appointment of inspectors was dealt with in clauses 32 and 33. Here the Victorian Act of 1900 had been followed, by making it compulsory to appoint inspectors, the reason being that without them the Act would not be enforced. The principle on which that was proposed was already to be found in the Food and Drugs Act, 1908 (section 8) and the Health Act, 1898 (sections 40 and 41). The remaining clauses of Part 2 followed the corresponding provisions of the Metropolitan Act referred to in the margin. Part III. dealt with the establishment of abattoirs and the expenses and

revenue thereof. Clause 45 affirmed the duty of the board of an area to establish an abattoir within a year after the proclamation of the area or such longer time as allowed by the Minister. Part III. of the Metropolitan Act gave statutory authority to a financial arrangement which had already been agreed upon by the various local government bodies concerned. It was obviously impossible to do that in the present Bill, which did not contemplate the carrying out of a scheme formulated before the passing of the Act; it was necessary to have some provision sufficiently elastic to meet any proper arrangement which might be made locally. Clause 47 therefore provided that the abattoir should be deemed to be "works and undertakings" authorized to be carried out by the local government bodies, and empowered them to declare any rates and borrow any moneys which might be necessary without obtaining the special consent of the ratepayers. That was quite reasonable, as the consent of the ratepayers had to be obtained, under Part II., before the abattoirs area could be proclaimed. Clause 49 appropriated the revenue in a similar manner to that enacted by the Metropolitan Act, namely, in the following order:—(1) For actual expenses; (2) in payment of interest; (3) in maintenance; (4) in establishing a sinking fund to repay cost of plant and the borrowed money within 42 years; and (5) in paying any surplus to the council or several councils concerned, provided that one-third of the surplus may be carried to a reserve fund. Part IV. dealt with the registration of an abattoir and the effect of registration. Clause 52, providing for registration of abattoirs, was taken from the New Zealand Act. Its object was to ensure that, before the restrictive and penal provision of the Act applied to any area, a suitable abattoir shall have been provided by the abattoir authority. After registration and the prescribed notice of the date when the abattoir would be available for use, provisions would come into operation throughout the abattoirs area similar to those enacted by Part IV. of the Metropolitan Act. As those provisions were considered with great care when that Act was before Parliament, it was hardly necessary to describe them in detail now. Generally speaking, they restricted the slaughtering of animals within the area to the registered abattoir, and prohibited the sale of meat slaughtered elsewhere, except that of animals slaughtered outside the area, which must be inspected at the abattoir. Sheep and lambs slaughtered for export at exempted slaughter houses or at the Government Produce Export Department were exempted under clause 55 if in-

spected and branded as therein provided. That followed section 12 of the amending Metropolitan Act passed last year. Clause 56 required private slaughter houses to be closed, except those to be used only for slaughtering for export or for curing bacon and hams. Clause 37 made provision for compensation similar to that contained in section 53 of the Metropolitan Act, except that it was not practicable to establish a limit (as was done by that section), which would be applicable to all areas. The provisions as to licensing of slaughtermen (clauses 58 and 59), inspection of live stock and carcasses (clause 60), and the disposal of diseased carcasses (clause 61), follow the Metropolitan Act. Clauses 63 provided for giving binding effect to an arrangement made by a majority of the butchers for mutual compensation for loss by destruction of diseased meat. That was taken from the New Zealand Act. The remaining clauses of Part IV. deal with the branding of carcasses and the inspection of meat slaughtered outside the area, and contained provisions for preventing infringements of the Act. Those follow the corresponding sections of the Metropolitan Act. Part V. applied the usual provisions as to acquiring land for public purposes. Part VI. conferred a comprehensive and detailed regulation making power on the board. There also the Act as to the metropolitan area had been copied. Clause 80 provided for regulations to be made by the Central Board of Health where the Local Abattoirs Board neglected to make proper provision. That followed the Victorian Act. (Hon. E. Lucas—"Why not adopt a uniform practice and put the regulations at the end of the Bill?") It did not matter much if they were put last or next to last. Regulations, whether made by the Abattoirs Board or the Central Board, needed the confirmation of the Governor (clause 82). In addition to the powers of boards, clause 78 gave the Governor power to make regulations prescribing the duties of inspectors. That matter was dealt with specially, because, as already mentioned, the effective value of the Act would depend on the inspectors. The remaining provisions, contained in Part VII., dealt with miscellaneous matters, principally legal procedure, and, being copied from the Metropolitan Act, need not be particularly described. A select committee of the House of Assembly reported on the Bill, and recommended two amendments. By an oversight these were not before the House when the third reading came on, and consequently were not inserted. He wished to insert them during the passage of the measure through the Council. The Bill would bring into existence where considered desirable by people concerned, abattoirs in country dis-

tricts, and there was no reason why the benefit attaching to the abattoirs system should not be extended to places outside the metropolitan area. The present Act provided for abattoirs for the metropolitan area. A good deal of the machinery in this Bill was largely a repetition of that in the Metropolitan Abattoirs Act. (Hon. J. Lewis—"Will people have to have abattoirs whether they wish them or not?") It was a question of option. The people would have to take a poll to decide whether their district should be declared an abattoirs area. An area would not be declared unless expressly desired. The advantage generally that would accrue from the establishing of abattoirs, particularly in thickly populated parts of the country was such that people should be only too glad to vote for them. The majority of members represented country districts, and they would find nothing in the Bill to which they could reasonably take exception.

On the motion of the Hon. A. W. STYLES the debate was adjourned on October 31.

## WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL.

In committee. Clause 14.

The Hon. B. A. MOULDEN moved strike out "and certifying medical practitioners respectively" in the two places in which the words appeared in the clause.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said the draftsman explained that the words applied exclusively to industrial diseases, and he would not oppose the amendment.

Carried. Clause as amended passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY said a consequential amendment in a similar direction was necessary in clause 4.

The CHAIRMAN—If the Chief Secretary tells me it is a consequential amendment I will make it.

The Hon. B. A. MOULDEN said the reason of striking out clause 9 the following words in clause 11 should be deleted—"And any person who has been called to pay an indemnity under the section of this Act relating to subcontractors."

The CHIEF SECRETARY said he preferred to refer it to the Parliamentary draftsman.

Bill reported; report adopted; third reading, October 28.

## STEAM BOILERS BILL.

In committee. Clause 18—"Boilers to be fitted with certain fittings."